



3 1761 05260657 1

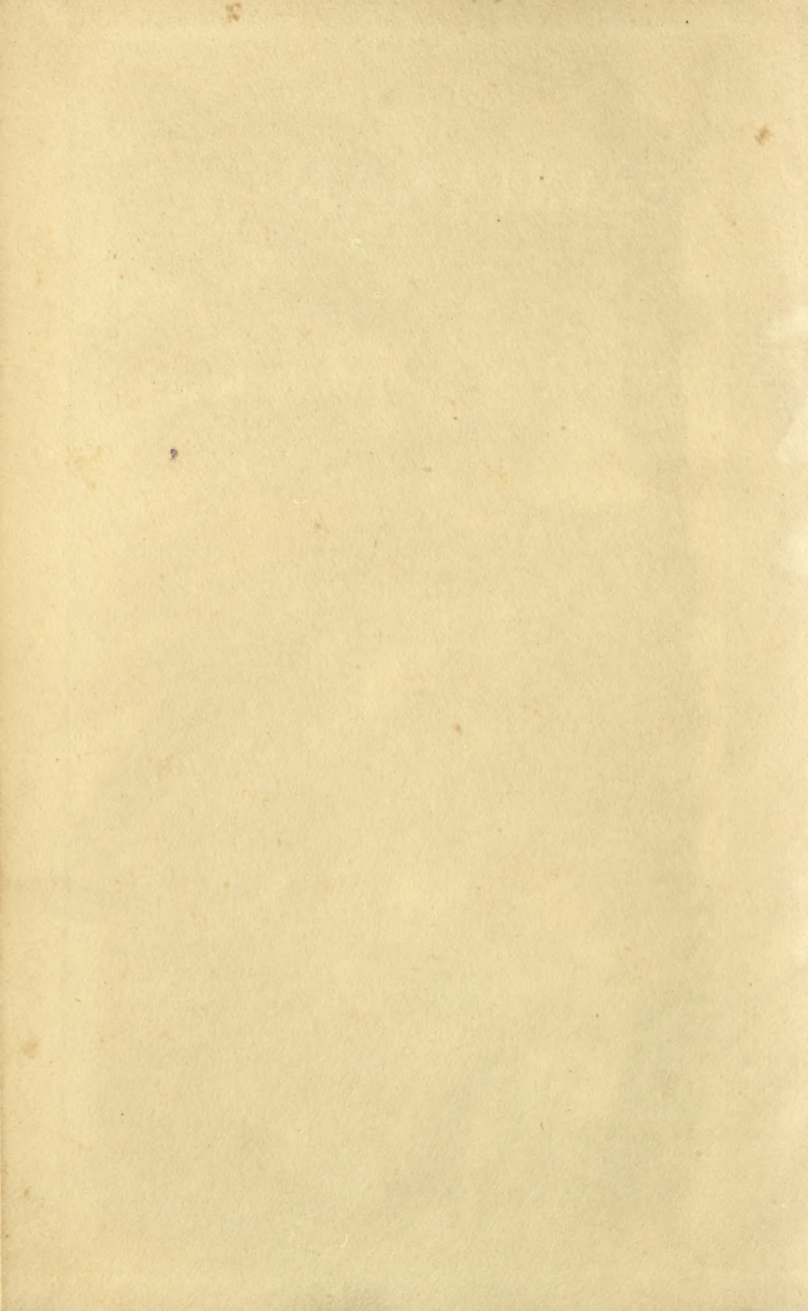
Elchanan :

THE LEGEND
OF A
JEWISH POPE.

XX
189
13
910
. 1
ROBA

NDLER.





ELCHANAN :

THE LEGEND OF A JEWISH POPE.

BY

GEORGE H. HÄNDLER.

London :

PUBLISHED BY

LUZAC & CO.

46, GREAT RUSSELL STREET, W.C.

1910.



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.—A Political Discussion in a German Inn in the Middle Ages.

„ II.—A Clerical Consultation.

„ III.—The Jewish Ghetto. The Rabbi and his Son.

„ IV.—The Christian Nurse and her Father Confessor.

„ V.—The Kidnapping of the Rabbi's Son.

„ VI.—Adam Desiderius' Career in the Church of Rome.

„ VII.—The Bishop and the Jewish Maiden.

„ VIII.—Gregory and his Career. The Quarrel between Gregory VII. and the Emperor.

„ IX.—Adam Desiderius summoned to Rome. A Second Clerical Consultation.

„ X.—Adam Desiderius elected Pope. Receives a Secret Communication.

„ XI.—The Jewish Delegates. A Chess Party between the Pope and the Rabbi.

„ XII.—The Pope's disappearance.

„ XIII.—Pope Victor dies a Martyr for his old Faith.

1875 F 2 144



A POLITICAL DISCUSSION IN AN INN.

A JEWISH POPE.

CHAPTER I.

A POLITICAL DISCUSSION IN A GERMAN INN IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

ON a tempestuous night in September, about the middle of the 11th century, a number of the citizens of Mayence were gathered together in one of the Inns of that old city to spend a rainy night in drink and gambling; whilst some of them in a smaller room were sitting, with their big tankards before them, discussing the stirring events of that period. Political disputations over their cups were already at that time a most favourite occupation of the German Burghers. These were generally of a boisterous nature and often ended in actual fights, so much so that many of the disputants had to be carried home with broken heads.

On the night in question the subject of the discussion was the sanguinary struggle which was being carried on between the Emperor Henry IV. and the Pope. All kinds of opinions were freely expressed about the issue of the struggle, diverse prognostications were indulged in according to the side espoused by the speakers. Higher and higher the excitement grew. As the passions became hotter the altercations grew louder, stimulated by drink and contradiction. There was such a din that one could scarcely hear his own voice; but just as the fierce altercation threatened to break out into active violence,

one man, prompted either by cunning or malice, gave the conversation an abrupt turn by the remark that the Emperor would not have been able to carry on the struggle against the Holy Father if he had not been supported by loans from the Jews. These words acted like a magic spell.

In a moment the contention which was just on the point of assuming such threatening proportions ceased, and gave place to a kind of spontaneous unanimity. The word "Jews" acted like a lightning conductor, turning all the talk into another channel, to a subject about which there existed no diversity of opinion. A chord had been struck which found a responsive echo in hearts full of a diapason of base passions: envy, hatred, greed and fanaticism. The strife of tongues ceased for some moments, arms and fists raised for the fight sunk down again, and all began to vie with one another in inveighing against the "damned Jews." A consultation began on more amicable terms. All kinds of propositions were started how to put a stop to their increasing wealth, a prosperity acquired by sucking the life-blood of good Christians.

Some, more wildly disposed, were for curtailing their already very scanty rights and privileges, or for expelling them from the realm altogether. Others held this to be quite inadequate, and proposed that they should first be deprived of their ill-gotten gains, of which the lion's share was to be given to the Church and the rest, being thus sanctified, distributed among good Christian citizens. Others again, imbued with a more burning zeal for the Church, considered these proceedings to be much too mild, and recommended the employment of more radical means, namely, to

slay the whole lot of them, women and children included, so as to be rid of them for ever. Others again, evincing grave concern for the good of the human race and the growth of the Church, thought it would be more advisable and more Christian-like to exempt the little children from the general massacre, to baptize them first and then to put them into the hands of monks and nuns, with a view to their being brought up as future warriors of the Church. Such and similar propositions were broached, and this mild contest lasted till late into the night ; some becoming sleepy betook themselves to their homes, whilst others overpowered by their potations stretched themselves on the benches where they were just sitting and fell asleep.

CHAPTER II.

A CLERICAL CONSULTATION.

THE day after the scene described above, a man—the same who had introduced the subject of the Jews at the Inn—wended his way from the somewhat obscure quarter of the city in which he lived to another of far greater pretension to elegance, and entered into one of the stately buildings it contained. Challenged by the janitor, he asked to see a Church dignitary who was staying there as the guest of a rich citizen of the place. The servant who took in the message soon returned and told the visitor that the Prelate (whose name was Canon Odo or Eude, afterwards Bishop of Ostia and still later “Pope Urban II.”), would be ready to receive him as soon as some other visitors, whom he had invited, should have arrived. Soon after he was ushered into the presence of the Prelate,

with whom, besides some other priests, were two monks. These two, both still young, were destined hereafter to play an important part in the history of the Church and therefore deserve our closer attention. Both bore the name of Peter, and both had that emaciated aspect which told of severe exercises of fastings and castigations to which they subjected themselves in order to attain a higher degree of sanctity. Both had eyes beaming with enthusiasm, yet there was a marked difference between the two. One of them, Peter of Amiens, he who became later known as Peter the Hermit, whose whole mind was concentrated on the interest and increasing power of the Church which, he thought, ought to rule the world, had succeeded in banishing from his disposition all milder feelings as a weakness calculated to lead a true servant of the Church astray from his duty, and on the other hand he considered every way, however tortuous, however cruel, right in this holy cause, and he thus entered heart and soul into the plans of Odo of which we shall still have to report. The other Peter, known in history as Peter Damiani, also one of the most zealous defenders of the Church, who yet preserved a sense of what was absolutely right, as also a heart which could feel pity for his enemies, and even for those of the Church, and was so far from common weakness, that he had the heart to stand out against many abuses which had crept in among the clergy: and even did not hesitate to rebuke the noted Hildebrand (afterwards Pope Gregory VII.), for his unscrupulous ambition and his intrigues, addressing him in some of his letters as "Sancte Satana"! When the above-mentioned visitor was shown in to give his report, Odo said to him: "Well, friend, what were you able to do yesterday

in the cause of our holy mother Church?" "I hope," the man answered, "that our Holy Father will not have reason to be dissatisfied with the work of his humble servant, for though it was no easy matter to bring a turbulent multitude like that among which I was last night, all at once to an agreement, and to direct their attention to the affairs of our Church, yet by bidding my opportunity I succeeded to give their excited feelings a new direction which may be even more conducive to the advantage of the cause of the Church and our Holy Father, the Pope."

"And what was that?" asked Canon Odo.

"I succeeded in rousing the zeal of all those present to take those steps which we have so long contemplated against that obnoxious people the Jews, to deprive them of their ill-gotten wealth and bring it all into the coffers of Holy Church in order to assist the Holy Father in carrying on his struggle with the recalcitrant Emperor and other princes, and also to prepare the way for a crusade against the infidel Mohammedans for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre of our blessed Saviour. It was wonderful and most satisfactory to perceive what unanimity there exists among our good German citizens on this laudable subject; for though there were some differences about the methods in which to deal with these enemies at home, there was a common consent that something must to be done."

"That was indeed a clever trick of yours," Canon Odo said, "which shall not be forgotten, and which will be adequately rewarded in due time. But next we must endeavour to bring to our side those princes who still protect the Jews. What think you, Peter?"

he continued, turning to one of the two monks who had been attentive listeners to the foregoing remarks.

“ I think,” answered Peter of Amiens, that if we bring the present position of the Church in the right way before them they may be won to our cause ; we must rouse their enthusiasm for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre out of the hands of the unbelievers, and how can we expect to prosper with this sin of omission on our conscience ? ”

“ Thou hast said rightly,” Odo answered, “ and I hope one day we shall be able to send you to the Holy Land, to visit the Holy Sepulchre which you have so long desired to see, to bring us information concerning its condition, which may rouse the enthusiasm of the apathetic to take steps against the enemies of the Church at home and abroad.”

“ What is your opinion, my Petrus Secundus ? ” This was addressed to the other monk, Peter Damianus. This man, who was of a mild disposition and more elevated mind than was commonly to be found in his class, replied : “ It is true that the Jews in their ignorance reject the doctrine of the Church and the claims of our Saviour, but we ought to take into consideration that they do it in ignorance, as the Apostle Paul had done before he was converted ; and that they are the nation whom God has chosen, that through them and out of them Salvation was to come to the whole world, and we have the promise that the veil is at the end to be removed from their eyes. Ought we not to bear with them, especially as they are on the whole peaceful citizens, and do not interfere with the Church in any way, neither have they the power nor the will to employ offensive measures against Christians. Let us by all means rouse

ourselves to regain the Holy Sepulchre from the hand of the infidels who do oppress our brethren in the East, but as to the Jews, let us remember that they are the kinsmen of our Saviour and the apostles, and our duty is to win them to the faith by kindness and the example of a holy life which is more in conformity with the teaching of Christ and of that Apostle whose "heart's desire and prayer for Israel" was "that they might be saved."

"That all sounds very well and might have served in the first three centuries," answered Bishop Odo; "but since that time matters have changed; for by their persistent rejection of the truth the Jews have become reprobates and outcasts and are a thorn in our side and an offence to all true believers, and not only that, but by their cunning they have succeeded in sucking the life-blood of the nations among whom they dwell, and have amassed riches which would be better employed in supplying the means which the Church needs for wrenching the power from the hand of the infidel Saracens and for extending her influence throughout the world. It is therefore my conviction that we ought to use our best efforts to deprive the Jews of their baneful influence. And now return all of you to your occupation, and on a further occasion we will again confer on the subject."



THE RABBI AND HIS SON.

CHAPTER III.

THE JEWISH GHETTO.

THE RABBI AND HIS SON.

WE will now introduce our readers to another part of the city where a very different and a far more peaceful scene was taking place. This part consisted mainly of one long, narrow and somewhat dark lane of four or five-storied houses. The houses on either side stood so near to those on the other, that it was almost possible to shake hands across, and quite easy to hold a conversation. Rags, pieces of paper and other rubbish were strewn about everywhere, no one taking the trouble to sweep them aside. The principal thoroughfare, called by the inhabitants "The lane" (Die Gasse), was intersected by narrower and still dirtier lanes, from which passages led into the inner courts of the houses. All these buildings teemed with life. Children were romping about everywhere. Old men and women, in a small way of traffic offering their wares, were at home here, whilst the more vigorous paterfamilias followed his vocation of pedlar, plodding over the country, calling at small villages and farms throughout the whole week, travels from which he rarely returned before Friday late in the afternoon. However insignificant and miserable most of these dwelling houses might appear on the outside, leading the beholder to assume corresponding poverty and want within, this was by no means the case. Under the outward unpretentious guise, there was, in most cases, hidden considerable opulence and even riches, and in some cases absolute luxuriousness.

There were inner rooms which were furnished with a splendour of which no Prelate or Burggrave need have been ashamed. The approaches to these chambers were carefully concealed from the eyes of the uninitiated, so that it could not even be surmised what these dirty houses contained within. To these retreats the Jew used to withdraw on his Sabbath-days and high festivals to rest, though but for a short time, from his toilsome labour of the week, and to spend a few quiet hours in the bosom of his family. Here in the midst of his own household he broke bread and blessed the cup and felt himself like a patriarch among his own. But why should we dwell longer in describing what has been so often described, "The Jewish Ghetto."

From one of the courts in these quarters a narrow passage led into the interior of one of those houses. Here in a simple and cleanly room, one might have seen a man not yet old, though venerable-looking, sitting at a table with a parchment roll before him, over which he intently pored. Around him were many more such rolls, some of which were of great antiquity and value. The walls of the room were also lined with similar rolls on the shelves. Most of them contained writings on Talmudical and Cabbalistic subjects, although some were of a more scientific kind. It was from there that the Rabbi was known to have gathered his great learning, and not only this, but according to a current tradition, by knowledge of the practical Cabbala and the secret powers of the letters of the great Name (Shem hamphorash) he was enabled to accomplish miraculous things, and compel the powers of nature to bend to his behest. But more than this, on account of his extreme piety and holy life, the Rabbi was supposed to be invested with great authority and

considerable influence in the Celestial Councils, to such an extent that when a fatal decree was about to be issued against the Jews in captivity, that they were to undergo great persecutions from their oppressors, he was often enabled by his intercession to have the sentence revoked, during his lifetime at least. This man was Rabbi Simeon of Mainz, called "the Great," author of some Synagogue prayers and poems well known among the Jews even to this day, and marked out with the acrostics of his name. In the period of which we speak he was still in vigorous health, though some premature wrinkles were already noticeable on his venerable countenance, which were caused by his constant and unremitted mental labour, joined to frequent fasts, immersions, and other ascetic exercises. For like all pious Jews at that time, those exercises were regarded as indispensable for attaining a high degree of knowledge of the Divine mysteries contained in the Cabbala, and particularly the practical part of it, by which the student was supposed to be enabled to acquire supernatural powers. This mode of life, however, was not able to produce in the Rabbi before us any narrowness of mind or to affect his noble and mild disposition. He was engaged in composing one of those liturgical poems which delight the worshippers, not less by their artistic construction than by the piety they breathe. His lips moved as he was rehearsing some of the verses, and so absorbed was he in his task that he did not notice the approach of his little boy until he came quite close and drew the attention of his father to himself by a gentle caress. Far from rebuking the child for his intrusion, the Rabbi ceased from his own task, and began to occupy himself with the boy—his Elchanan ("God

graciously bestowed"). In this son all his earthly affections were centred : he spent much of his time in his education and even took interest in the amusements of the boy, endeavouring to give them a rational direction. Thus at this early age he initiated him into the game of chess, in which he himself greatly excelled and many an hour of relaxation he spent in playing that game with the boy. But on this occasion the Rabbi's mind was occupied with higher thoughts. Rabbi Simeon was contemplating the great tribulation which was about to befall his beloved nation by the action of the Crusaders, leading to cruel persecutions by a fanatical populace goaded on by the preaching of monks and bigoted priests. He foresaw that many of his people would not stand the fiery ordeal, but would desert from the faith of their forefathers. In view of such events he admonished his son to stand fast in the faith and remain true to his religion in the days of peril. He spoke to him first of the great privileges bestowed by God upon the nation of Israel, of His wonderful and gracious guidance of them in times of old, and the mighty deeds which he wrought among them : how He preserved them throughout all the time of their captivity, how that faithful to His gracious promise that " He would never make an end of Jacob," He was with them in the land of their captivity, so that during more than a thousand years of exile Israel still existed as a nation. He then spoke in a kind of prophetic spirit of the approaching time of dire calamity, which soon after his death would break forth against the Jewish communities in Germany, and in particular the one of his birth-place. He admonished him to stand firm, unshaken in the true faith, never to desert his brethren, and when the

occasion arose, to be ready to glorify the blessed Name of Jehovah by the death of a martyr. "My son," said the Rabbi, "remember that the eyes of the whole captivity will, after my departure, be fixed on thee; they will all look up to thee as their example and guide; let thy life and walk shine before them; keep intact, unshaken the Law delivered by God to Moses in the sight of all Israel, amid thunder and lightning. Be mindful to observe the traditions of our wise men, read them diligently, enshrine them deeply in your soul, and whatever the future may have in store, depart not a hair's breadth from their precepts. Oh," exclaimed the Rabbi, "I perceive dark clouds already gathering on the horizon, I hear the rolling of thunder, ere long the storm will burst on the devoted heads of our dear people. I shall be gathered first to my fathers in peace, and shall not see the dire calamities with my bodily eyes. This assurance I have received from above, but thou, my son, shalt remain and suffer with thy brethren; and, as the spirit tells me, thou art destined for great things, for the glorification of the Great Name. I murmur not against the all-wise decree of the Almighty, but rather praise His name that He has chosen for thee a glorious end. Hail, my son, blessed art thou, for like the prophet Elijah thou shalt gloriously mount up to heaven in a flame of fire. Your end stands clear before my vision, but the intermediate time, alas! is wrapt in a dark impenetrable cloud which hides thee from my sight, but this also, being decreed, must be for some good. Now my son, receive the blessing of your father before the beginning of this high festival" (it was on the eve of the Day of Atonement). He then laid both his hands on the head of the child and pronounced with great solemnity

the usual benediction, concluding with the words : "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD." He then led his son back to his nurse, as it was time to go to the synagogue in order to perform the most solemn service of the year, when the Jews seek to appease God's displeasure and to obtain forgiveness for the sins of the past year. The Rabbi as usual spent the whole night in prayer and reading of Psalms. The dawn found him still at his reading desk, when the devoted worshippers began to collect for the morning prayer (Shachrith). This lasts generally several hours, for the Jewish communities being never safe of their possessions or even of their lives, pour out their souls in deep laments and yearning supplications to their Heavenly Father for the termination of their long-continued captivity and the speedy advent of their long-expected Messiah, who is to lead them out of the land of their enemies and bring them into the land of their forefathers, in order to build again the Holy City and the Temple—to restore the Sacrifices and pristine worship of Jehovah "as in the days of old and in former years." When this prayer, and also the second, so called the Musaph was ended, Rabbi Simeon mounted the Almemar (Pulpit) and delivered the customary address, or sermon, in which he urged upon his hearers that the length of their captivity which they had to suffer was due to their national sins and want of faith in the promises of God. He called on them to repent of their sins, and to turn with an upright heart to the God of their fathers, who was waiting with open arms to receive His penitent children. The congregation listened with rapt attention and deep groans, and with eyes streaming with tears followed his soul-stirring words.

On descending from the pulpit he found that his son Elchanan, who had been brought to the synagogue in the morning, was now so weakened by fasting and the heat of the room that he was nearly fainting from exhaustion, he therefore sent him home that he might recover somewhat under the tender care of his nurse. But whilst the Rabbi Simeon, as we just related, was wrestling with the accuser of his brethren in the house of prayer, that evil one was preparing for him unutterable sorrow in the Rabbi's own house.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHRISTIAN NURSE, AND HER FATHER CONFESSOR.

THE Nurse of the Rabbi's son was a Roman Catholic called Margarethe, the widow of a soldier who had fallen in one of the Emperor's battles. The Rabbi had once saved her from great distress. On account of debts contracted by her late husband, her household furniture had been seized and was to be sold by auction. The Rabbi happened to pass the door of the place where the sale was to be held, and beholding the poor woman bitterly weeping, with her dying child in her arms, he made enquiries and having learnt the state of things, was touched by her misery, paid the debt and saved her from ruin. The Rabbi's wife, who learned the case from her husband, brought some nourishment for the sick child and summoned a doctor, but the child which was past all hope soon died. After the death of the

child the woman came to the house of her benefactors to thank them for their kindness, and when they learnt that the woman had no relations who could care for her, and that she was willing to earn her daily bread by honest work, and being favourably impressed by her open countenance and simple-minded speech, they engaged her to help in their house especially for such work on the Sabbath day which Jewish servants are not permitted to do—(a Shabbeth Goye). Later on, perceiving her kindly disposition and her growing affection for the Rabbi's only child, Elchanan, she was installed as his nurse. Frau Margarethe fully justified the confidence reposed in her, for not only did she fulfil all her duties faithfully, but she watched over the child with motherly affection. The Rabbi and his wife congratulated themselves on possessing such a domestic servant. Thus years passed by, the woman was not interfered with in her religious duties as a Roman Catholic, for she was allowed to go to church, where she had her Father Confessor, a Dominican Friar, Father Ambrosius, a zealous and devoted servant of the Church of Rome. When the Friar learnt from the woman that she was in the service of a Jew, he was somewhat startled, but when the woman told him the particulars and the circumstances which led her into the Rabbi's house, he did not forbid her to stay on, but at the same time formed a plan to make use of her position to the advantage of his Church.

In the confessional, as is usual in such cases, he put all kinds of questions to the woman concerning her employers, which the guileless woman faithfully answered. She spoke with praise of the kindness of her employers, of the great learning of the Rabbi, of

his influence and authority among his people, and above all she could never tire of expatiating on the capacities and talents of the boy under her care. The thought then arose in the mind of the monk, that it would be a meritorious work, if this rare and phenomenal child could be gained for the Church, and when he learned that the boy was left to her care during some part of the day, he matured a plan, and sought to win the woman over to be his assistant. At first her upright nature shrank from these proposals. The priest, however, knew so well how to exercise his influence over her conscience that at last she began to think of obeying. He proved to her by all kinds of sophistical arguments that there was nothing wrong in deceiving her employers if it were done for the glory of the Holy Mother Church, to which perfect, unquestioning obedience was due by all her children ; besides, it would be a noble and meritorious deed to snatch a lost soul from perdition and the fire of hell. At last all opposition on the part of the poor woman was broken down, and she agreed to bring the child to him whenever a favourable opportunity occurred.



THE KIDNAPPING.

CHAPTER V.

THE KIDNAPPING OF THE RABBI'S SON.

BUT the opportunity was long in coming, for the woman, terrified in her inmost conscience, in spite of all the sophistry her confessor employed, managed for some time to escape the disagreeable task imposed upon her. The monk, however, surmising how the case stood, became more pressing each time she came, and even threatened her with a denial of absolution if within a certain time she did not bring the boy with her, and when the woman pleaded that no opportunity had hitherto presented itself, he exclaimed, "Then an opportunity must be made! Whoever wants to deserve Heaven must not let his hands rest, but must apply his shoulder to the wheel : he who wishes to save a soul from perdition must spare no trouble, shrink from no danger ! " The terrified woman tearfully promised to find means as soon as possible for carrying out the command of her confessor, overcoming her still remaining scruples with the thought that it was the Father Confessor, standing in the place of God, who bid her do this thing. When therefore on the Day of Atonement the child was brought home from the Synagogue and consigned to her care, she imagined that she perceived an intimation from above for carrying out the command of her confessor. After a short struggle, she, under the pretext that he needed some fresh air (which indeed was the case) led the boy, who had no misgivings, towards the Monastery, which was

not very far from the gates of the city. When Father Ambrosius saw them approaching he went to meet them, entered into a friendly conversation with the boy, and invited both to enter the Convent. After some reluctance on the part of the child, and great misgiving on the part of the woman, they did so. Father Ambrosius continued to talk with the child, and soon found that the woman had not exaggerated his intellectual capacities. On a sign from the monk Frau Margarethe left the room unperceived, and she did so with a heavy heart. For some while the Priest amused the boy with questions and anecdotes, and when the child looked about for his nurse, and at last asked for her, he was for some time put off with evasions ; then, as he became disquieted and restless, and grew more pressing in his demands for his nurse, he was told that she had been obliged to go away, and he would have to remain in the Convent till she returned. They brought him some dainties and playthings, but the boy would not look at them, and more excitedly continued to clamour for Margarethe. At last Father Ambrosius took him by the hand and led him from the room, but instead of taking him to his nurse, as the boy had hoped, he handed him over to some nuns, whom he had summoned for the purpose from a Nunnery not very far off. These on their part tried to appease the child, but without success. And when the boy perceived that all his demands for his nurse were fruitless he burst into a violent fit of weeping, which grew into convulsive sobbing, so that even the nuns, moved to compassion, were at a loss what to do, and they would gladly have let him go if it had not been for the strict orders of the monk. At last the child, exhausted by

weeping, sank into a kind of stupor and then into a salutary sleep, which for a time afforded him oblivion of all his troubles. When he awoke and found that all his tears and prayers to be taken home were of no avail, he settled into a deep melancholy, and would partake of no food, and in consequence fell at last into a dire malady, which brought him to the brink of the grave. After some time he began slowly to recover, his youthful body regained strength, but the activity of his mind was slower in returning. His memory of the past was apparently wiped out; it had become a blank, he could remember nothing that had happened to him before his illness, nor did he even know his own name. When he had fully recovered his health and it was thought advisable to give him some instruction, it was found that his mental faculties were perfect, and his capacities wonderfully bright and unaffected by his former illness, only his memory for former things was gone. Father Ambrosius, who undertook his first instruction, could only congratulate himself on the acquisition of such a bright pupil, and the circumstance that the boy had lost all remembrance of the past was hailed by him as a blessed one. Frau Margarethe, when she had parted from the boy at the convent at the bidding of the priest, had returned to the house of her employers. She had been instructed by the priest what account to give them of the child, but when she was asked by them what had become of the boy, that unfortunate creature, unversed in the art of deception, lost all self-possession, and could only break out in hysterical sobs, and when she perceived the great distress of the parents which she had occasioned, she was so affected by the sight that she fell into convulsions and had to be carried to

her room. For a long time she remained almost insensible, and to all questions she answered only with an imbecile smile—her mind was gone. The doubly-dejected father, left in a torturing uncertainty, mourned for his child as dead, though deep in his inmost soul there remained a lurking conviction that in some wonderful way he would still find him. The boy was not two thousand paces from the house of his parents, but he was to them as inaccessible as if separated from them by mountains and seas.

CHAPTER VI.

ADAM DESIDERIUS' CAREER IN THE CHURCH OF ROME.

WHEN Elchanan's health improved he made rapid progress in his studies. In his memory some faint vision of his former life arose, scenes of his infancy dimly hovered in his recollection like a dream and then again disappeared like a mirage of the desert, and in trying to fix these images he became quite dizzy, so that he had to desist and occupy himself with the present alone. When he had finished his studies in the preparatory school he was sent to a seminary at Würzburg, where, under the guidance of teachers who according to the ratio of the knowledge to be obtained in the Church in those ages, were considered clever, Elchanan, or Adam, as the newly-fledged student was now called, made rapid progress in the acquirement of learning, and so greatly distinguished himself as to surpass all his fellow-students,

After having in the most creditable manner accomplished his *trivium*, as well as his *Quadrivium*, he went to Rome to prepare for the priestly offices. This took some years. The splendid talents of the young man attracted attention, and brought him under the special notice of Cardinal Hildebrand, who later occupied the Papal Chair under the name of Gregory VII. This man soon perceived the extraordinary abilities of the young man. He saw that he might be a useful instrument not only of the Church but also of his own ambitious plans, and he therefore took him under his patronage, and when made Pope admitted him to his Court. Under such protection it was a matter of course that Adam was early ordained to the Priesthood and quickly mounted the hierarchical steps, so that when he had scarcely attained the canonical age he was consecrated Bishop. A most peculiar event gave the mind of the young Bishop a direction which Gregory VII. could never have anticipated. Pope Gregory VII., in order to further his ambitious designs, had adopted the practice of placing the most zealous of his adherents at nearly all the Courts of the ruling Princes of Germany either as Court Preachers or Papal Legates. These were directed to use all possible means for furthering the establishment of the supremacy of the Roman See over Emperors, Kings and Princes. Among these was also Elchanan, now *Adam Desiderius*, who was devoted heart and soul to his patron. By a special providence, Mainz (Mentz or Mayence) was the place to which he was appointed to exercise his diplomatic activity. Mainz was the residence of an Archbishop who was also an Arch-chancellor of the German Empire. Whenever Elchanan took a drive or a walk in the environs of

the city, it seemed to him as if he had already seen these rural scenes at some remote period of his life. Obscure recollections rose spectre-like before his soul, but much as he tortured his brains to fix them, they melted away or got into a chaotic confusion. When he saw Jews, it appeared to him as if he had once been in some way connected with that despised nation. In vain he sought for a solution of the riddle. The idea, however, gained ground without his being able to get rid of it. An irresistible desire, which amounted to yearning, arose within him to put himself in some kind of communication with the Jews of Mainz. But how was it possible for a man of his position in the Romish Church, a church so inimical to this nation, to effect this without drawing upon himself unpleasant attention? At length an event happened calculated to further his desire. One day, as he was making an excursion to the little town of Bingham-on-the-Rhine, an old Jewish Rabbi threw himself before his carriage so suddenly that the coachman could only with great difficulty stop the horses from trampling the old man under their hoofs. Some of the Bishop's attendants proceeded to remove the man, but the Bishop beckoned to him to approach, which he did, and then the Bishop, with much kindness, asked him what was his desire and why he stopped his carriage in so desperate a manner. The old man was too excited to utter more than the ejaculation: "Mercy! Pity!" holding forth at the same time a written paper, which was evidently a petition of some sort. This the Bishop accepted from his hands and read it on the spot. The contents of the writing affected him much, for his features quivered, and there were signs of deep emotion on his face. The petition of the Rabbi con-

tained a pitiful tale. He had an only daughter possessed of uncommon beauty, who, when walking one day with some companions outside the citygate was seized by one of the robber knights, who in those times infested the regions of the Rhine, placed on his horse, and carried off to his abode. In vain he addressed himself to the Governors of the province, to the officers of the realm. They could undertake nothing against those scourges of the country. In this desperate state the maiden's father heard of the newly-appointed Bishop, who during his short sojourn in the place had already gained for himself a name for kindness and affability to inferiors. The father had also once seen him in passing, and thought to read in his features that he must be one to whom the unfortunate would not appeal in vain. He determined to make a bold attempt. He had a petition written for him in which the story of his trouble was briefly related, and he eagerly waited for a favourable opportunity to deliver it into the hands of the Bishop. This had now been done, and the result justified his venture beyond expectation, for the Bishop, after perusing the document, held out his hand, which the Rabbi fervently and reverently carried to his lips. The Bishop said that he would look into the case and see what he could do. By his influence at the court of the Archbishop, he was enabled in a short time to effect the deliverance of the maiden, and have her restored to her family. This act gained for Bishop Desiderius the hearts of all the Jews of Mainz. The story of such a deed by a Christian Bishop was spread from mouth to mouth. Such an event was a most rare and remarkable occurrence in those dark ages. Bishop Desiderius was extolled as the greatest friend of Israel

among the Christians, and his name handed from father to son, and prayers were offered in all synagogues of places wherever Jews dwelt, beseeching the Almighty to grant him a long and prosperous life.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BISHOP AND THE JEWISH MAIDEN.

THE rescued maiden herself, accompanied by her father, went to the Bishop's residence to express her deep gratitude for what he had done for her. With a pleasant feeling the Bishop's eye rested on the virgin, whose features represented the type of her race in one of its noblest forms. Her expression of gratitude he answered in the most condescending and kindly manner, and, mindful of his office as a priest of his Church, he went on to show her that what he did for her was only carrying out his Master's command to do good to all men, and he expressed a wish that the nation, to whom she belonged, might one day acknowledge the claims of Jesus as their Messiah and Saviour, and confess the true faith. The maiden avoided giving a direct answer to his remarks, and only reiterated her protestations of gratitude in still warmer terms. But when the Bishop once more reverted to the subject, and continued to urge the claims of the Christian religion, her face became suffused with the flush of indignation, and the otherwise timid maiden boldly expressed to the dignitary her dissent in an uncompromising manner. She

spoke at first with enthusiasm of the antiquity and excellence of the creed in which she had been reared, and then, boldly passing from defence to attack, she mercilessly exposed the shortcomings of the Church of Rome, her want of charity, her superstition, her intolerant and persecuting spirit, etc. When the Bishop in painful displeasure turned his head away, she threw herself at his feet, and embracing his knees, in deep humiliation and great sorrow, her eyes streaming with tears, she exclaimed: "Forgive, forgive, most noble lord! most potent benefactor, that I have allowed myself to be carried away by the zeal for the religion of my forefathers beyond the bounds of the respect due to your high position, and of the deep reverence and grateful affection which I feel for your person. Turn not away the light of your countenance from your humble handmaiden, who is ready to shed her blood for you if necessary; do not withdraw your benevolence from her who would gladly dedicate to you the life which you have saved from misery and disgrace, as one of your lowest servants. It was not my intention to hurt your feelings, or to speak against a faith which shows itself in such noble deeds as exemplified by your Eminence, but only against that system, the bitter fruit of which my nation has had to taste for ages. Had all who confess the Christian religion acted as you act, who could resist its influence? But all that we and our fathers have hitherto experienced from those that confess the name of Christ, is only calculated more and more to estrange us from it. You alone, noble lord, form an exception among thousands, and I feel it." She went on in a rapturous manner, emboldened by his silence, "I feel it, nay, some inward voice tells me that you

stand nearer to our nation than any other of your compeers. Your name (she continued in rising ecstasy) will be counted one day among the noblest of God's chosen people, when the nation now despised and trodden down shall occupy that place which is reserved for them by their covenant-keeping God."

The Bishop might have pointed out to her that actions of individuals do not affect the divine truths as revealed in the Word of God, and that neither persecution nor idolatry are sanctioned by the New Testament, but as the Bishop, notwithstanding all his learning regarded the Church as the supreme authority, he, after a few more feeble attempts, terminated the discussion, and with courtesy and kindness dismissed father and daughter. Not long after this Bishop Desiderius was recalled to Rome on important business, and was sent, as an envoy to the Emperor, to settle the differences which had arisen between him and the Papal See. These affairs so engrossed his attention that for a time the Rabbi and his daughter were no more thought of.

CHAPTER VIII.

GREGORY AND HIS CAREER.

THE QUARREL BETWEEN GREGORY VII. AND THE EMPEROR.

THE quarrel between Gregory VII. and the Emperor Henry IV. had assumed greater dimensions. The Pope hurled his ban at the Emperor, and the latter, left in the lurch by the German Princes, had to submit to the overbearing Pontiff. This humiliation

culminated in the tragic and comical scene at Canossa. Bishop Desiderius is said to have been present as Cardinal Secretary of State when Henry IV., after having stood for three days barefoot, and nearly half frozen in the penitential shirt before the Pope's door, was at last admitted, and had to fall at the feet of the haughty Pontiff and implore him to withdraw the ban. A revulsion of feeling among the Princes of Germany soon followed. The cord strung too tightly could not, in the nature of things, but snap. The overbearing conduct of the Vicegerent of Christ opened the eyes of the German Princes, and showed them their own peril if such enormities were allowed to continue. They perceived the necessity of combining with the Emperor in order to put a stop to the monstrous claims of the Roman Pontiff, if they were not all, one after another, prepared to become the victims of his pretensions. The victory of Gregory VII. which he had not only used but abused to the uttermost, gained the Emperor new adherents among the Princes, who were indignant at the treatment which their Sovereign had received at the Pope's hands. The Emperor was soon enabled to turn the tables upon the Pope, and repay him for all the indignities which he had made him to suffer. He deposed Gregory VII. and placed another Pope in the chair of St. Peter, Clemens III. The haughty Pontiff, before whom at one time the whole world trembled, had to end his days in exile. There, persisting in his spiritual pride to the very last, he gave up the ghost with that historical utterance : *Dilexi justitiam et odi iniquitatem ; propterea morior in exilio.* (I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity ; therefore I die in exile).

CHAPTER IX.

ADAM DESIDERIUS SUMMONED TO ROME.

A SECOND CLERICAL CONSULTATION.

THE chief reason for the summoning of Bishop Desiderius to Rome by Gregory VII. was that he might take part in a consultation which the Pope was about to hold with his intimates and some other dignitaries of the Church, concerning the setting on foot a Crusade to the Holy Land for the purpose of rescuing the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the Saracens, and if possible to conquer the whole of Palestine. The plan of such a Crusade had been started some sixty years before by Pope Sylvester II., but death had intervened, and prevented its being carried out. Of the succeeding Popes, some were prevented by the shortness of time that they occupied the papal chair, others by struggles with rival Popes, from giving their attention to this undertaking. Another Pope, Benedict IX., who by means of bribery had become Pope, had made himself so obnoxious by his profligacy, that he was twice deposed, and though twice reinstated by the influence of his family, was too much given up to worldly pleasures to think of a Crusade. John Gratian, Gregory VI., being also accused of having obtained his position by bribery, was deposed, and of his successors none had the opportunity or the inclination to organize a Crusade. Hildebrand, the patron of Desiderius, though a man of extraordinary abilities and great energy, was at first too engrossed in his quarrel with the Emperor Henry IV. to give his mind to the arrangement of a Crusade. When, however, he had at last achieved the victory over

the Emperor, he took up the plan with his usual energy, hoping by thus rousing the Christian world to strengthen still more the power and influence of the Roman Church of which he was the head. His first step was to summon his adherents to Rome in order to hold a consultation.

Among those, beside our friend Desiderius, were many Bishops, and one of them Odo, Bishop of Ostia (who was destined to carry it out as Pope Urban II.), besides a large number of priests and monks; including Peter, later known as Peter the Hermit. These two, Odo and Peter whom we mentioned in our account of the first consultation, were chafing at the delay of an undertaking which they had so much at heart, and rejoiced in the prospect of its being carried out at last. But Pope Gregory, who with all his energy possessed a shrewd judgment, and had in the meantime found that a reaction had set in among the German Princes in favour of the Emperor, did not think such an open appeal advisable till some further preparatory steps had been made to recover his influence among the Princes of Germany and France. Bishop Desiderius, on the contrary, whose inclinations were at no time on the side of violent measures, had never advocated the cause of the Crusades, and when discussed in his presence, was quite satisfied to hear that Pope Gregory was not inclined, at least for the present, to preach a Crusade, and some others were of the same opinion, and to the great chagrin of Odo and Peter the plan was shelved for the present. But these discussions, so strongly advocated by many Church dignitaries, who bore a great repute for sanctity, had a peculiar effect on the mind of Adam Desiderius, and the spirit they

evinced so contrary to the teaching of Christ and the Apostles; staggered him and caused him to think more on the subject and to ask himself: "Is this not a departure from the Spirit of Christ and His Gospel?—a forsaking of the first Love?" His mind began to be filled with misgivings, but knowing no one to whom he could confess his thoughts he had to confine them in his own breast.

Soon the affairs of his patron gave him so much to do that for some time he left off meditating on the subject: and it was not till after the death of Gregory VII., when he himself became the successor of St. Peter, that he resumed his meditations; for one day, when he was perusing some documents in the archives of the Vatican, he obtained a clearer insight into the plans and aims of the man on whom he was wont to look with so much reverence, and to whom he thought he owed so much gratitude. He discovered that his patron had made use of him for purposes which were not in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel, and not even with common justice and honesty, and it was not long till his idol lay shattered before him.

CHAPTER X.

ADAM DESIDERIUS ELECTED POPE. RECEIVES A SECRET COMMUNICATION.

AT the Conclave held by those Cardinals who had been on the side of Gregory VII., Desiderius was chosen as successor under the name of Victor III., and maintained his position against Clemens III., the Pope of the Imperial party. The hopes, however, of the Curia that he on whom the mantle of Gregory VII. had fallen would follow in the footsteps of his

predecessor and work in the same spirit for the subjection of all worldly power to the Papal See, were doomed to disappointment. Victor III., though in the lifetime of Gregory VII., one of his sincerest partisans, after Gregory's death showed no inclination to work on the same lines. As long as Gregory lived, Victor, from personal affection and gratitude to his protector, had supported his high aspirations and plans with all his power; but with the death of his patron all Victor's interest in the intrigues and machinations of the party ceased, and he was satisfied with retaining the position into which he had been placed by his party, whom he wished to serve and whose cause he was unwilling entirely to ruin. Although he had reached the goal which all who dedicate themselves to the cause of the Romish Church consider the highest pinnacle of their ambition, and was occupying a position in which Kings and Princes paid court to him, vying with each other for his favour, in his innermost heart he felt no satisfaction. When the duties of his office became less absorbing, his former recollection revived again, the dark period of his infancy arose out of the past and hovered like some picture wrapt in mist before his spirit. The words also, which he had heard from the Jewish maiden, gave him no rest, and a desire to learn more on the subject took possession of him. An irresistible impulse, attracting him to that despised and oppressed nation of Israel, stirred the hope in him that from them—and from them alone—he might obtain the key to the solution of his enigmatical dual existence. To get into contact with them was no easy matter. If the Bishop at Mainz was not able to effect it, still less was it possible for the highly placed Pontiff, on whom

all eyes were fixed, and who was continually surrounded by a suite of Cardinals and other dignitaries, and followed by a retinue of priests and monks.

While he was still meditating on the matter he was told that a monk from Germany solicited admission to the Holy Father's presence, in order to communicate important information. He granted him an audience, and the monk having been admitted, communicated to the Pope a surprising fact, which he had one day learned under the seal of confession, and this was nothing else than that he, the Pope, was descended from Jewish parents living in the City of Mainz. The old monk had been a teacher in the seminary at Würzburg at the time when Adam Desiderius studied there, and he had learned from the Director of that establishment that the promising young man in question was the son of a Rabbi. That was all. The monk could communicate nothing more on the subject, and the only person who would have been able to give any further information was Father Ambrosius, who died many years before. With this the Pope had to be content for the time. But, as was only natural, he determined to trace the subject still further, and to effect this he devised the following plan: He issued an order to the Archbishop of Mainz to direct the Jewish community of that city, one of the most noted in Germany for the great learning of their Rabbis, to send from their midst a députation to Rome to the intent of holding a disputation with some learned Roman Catholic divines, whom the Pope would appoint for the purpose, on the differences between the Jewish and the Roman Catholic religions. Such challenges were not unusual in those times, and similar disputations had been

held before in Italy and Spain. It called forth, however, great consternation and grave apprehension in the minds of the Jews, for very frequently those challenges were the precursors of all kinds of trouble. And as these disputations, even under the most felicitous circumstances, unless carried out with great tact and extraordinary precautions on the part of the Jews, might portend serious dangers, the Jews had to be very careful as to the choice of their representatives. They, consequently, used to choose the wisest, the most learned, and most experienced among their Rabbis, men well versed in science and general knowledge. On the side of the Church the same precautions were not observed: often unfit and fanatical spokesmen were put forward, and sometimes they were young and inexperienced theological hotspurs, or raw Jewish converts, who, possessing a little knowledge of Jewish law, thought themselves capable of coping with learned Jewish Rabbis. The Jews, however, on this occasion had to deal with an opponent of no common experience and learning, namely, with the Pope himself, who declared his intention to take part in the discussion. As the Pope had surmised, one of the great luminaries of the Jews, Rabbi Simeon the Great, of Mainz, was selected by the Jews to be one of their champions. Two young Rabbis of great learning were to act as his *adlati*, or assistants. As usual on such occasions, prayers with fastings were ordered in all Jewish synagogues, that the God of Israel might grant a happy issue out of this danger, and in His mercy avert any adverse consequences to the nation. When the deputies arrived in Rome they received on the part of the Pope a friendly reception. He had arrangements made

for them to lodge in his palace, and ordered a number of Jewish attendants and servants to be placed at their disposal. He also gave orders that no one was to hinder them in their religious observances.

CHAPTER XI.

THE JEWISH DELEGATES.

A CHESS PARTY BETWEEN THE POPE AND THE RABBI.

AFTER the Jewish delegates had rested from the fatigues of their journey the Pope invited Rabbi Simeon to visit him alone in his apartments, and when he came the Pope received him in the kindest way possible, and conversed with him in a friendly way on sundry topics. He asked him some questions about his family and other domestic affairs. The Rabbi's answer was somewhat like that which Jacob gave to Pharaoh: "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life." He related to him the various blows of adversity which had fallen upon him, the heaviest being the unaccountable disappearance of his only beloved child—a child of unusual promise. When he had imparted some more particulars about his loss, the surmise of the Pope that he himself might be that son grew almost to a certainty. He, however, said nothing, but passed on to the business concerning which he had summoned the Jewish deputation to Rome. The Rabbi tried to avoid a religious discussion, but when the Pope assured him that this was to be only a friendly and confidential conversation, he yielded. The Pope, in his argument, brought to bear all the power of his learning on the question in point, aston-



AT THE CHESSBOARD—"I WILL SACRIFICE THE QUEEN OF SHERA."

ishing the Rabbi by his great knowledge and theological acumen, and at the same time touching his heart by the kind and gentle manner with which he treated him throughout the discussion. Never in his whole life had the Rabbi felt himself so moved by kindness, and so impressed by arguments as on this occasion. But as the Pope, notwithstanding his great acquirements, was, by his monastic education, more versed in the so-called Fathers' traditions and legends than in the Word of God, the old experienced Rabbi succeeded in discovering the weak points in the Pope's arguments, and so drove the wedges of logic into them, that the Pope was unable to answer the trenchant criticism and satirical strictures of the emboldened Rabbi, and broke off the conversation under the pretext that both needed some rest and recreation in order, as he said, to gain strength for continuing the discussion to be resumed the following day.

In the meantime the Pope proposed that they should play a game of chess. In this contest also both antagonists showed themselves pretty equally matched, but here also it appeared as if the Rabbi would gain the victory ; for with masterly tactics he had pressed the right flanks of his opponent into a corner, so that the Pope, in order to retrieve his position, had to sacrifice a piece, and the Rabbi's victory, apparently, became merely a question of time ; when all at once the Pope exclaimed : " Strange ! Wonderfully strange ! It seems to me as if such a position had occurred to me once before, long, long ago, and also as if the way out of it had been shown to me. I have it ! I must sacrifice the Queen of Sheba ! " and he made a move, when, by sacrificing the black Queen he changed the whole face of the game, and turned the victory, which

the Rabbi seemed already to hold in hand, into defeat. The Rabbi started up from his seat, staggered and reeled, as if stunned by a sudden blow, and would have fallen to the ground if the Pope had not supported him in his arms. He also sank down into a chair in a state of agitation not to be described ; for he foresaw what was coming. At last the old man, under a flood of tears, broke out into the words : " My son ! my son, my long-lost beloved Elchanan ! Oh, that I must find you here ! Oh ! you it is, and none other ; for this move I showed you when you were a child, and these were the words I used on that occasion. Oh, that my eyes must behold you in such a position ! " Here his voice failed ; the Pope was also overpowered and unable to articulate a word. Simultaneously, as if by agreement, they fell on each others' neck and wept. For about half an hour there was nothing heard but the sobs of these two men. The Rabbi first recovered his power of speech. With all the eloquence of a father wrestling for the soul of his beloved son, he pleaded with the deeply-shaken Pope. He described to him in burning words the dastardly, devilish wickedness and perfidy by which he had been lured away from the bosom of his parents ; the means which were used to estrange him from the faith of his forefathers. The awakened memory of the Pope confirmed the words of the father ; the dark veil which hung over his childhood was lifted. The past in all its minutest details rose again before him. He beheld himself again as a child in the house of his loving parents in the narrow lane at Mainz ; the loving father watching with tenderness over his steps ; the solemn, sacred festivals which he observed in their society. He saw himself on the

way to the monastery at the hand of his nurse ; the strange, forbidding-looking man in a cowl who met them at the door ; the apparent friendliness at first, his subsequent harsh and cruel implacability. All that scene rolled past his mental vision whilst the dear father was pleading with him. He showed him the means which Rome was using in order to establish her tyrannous rule in every country ; the intolerance and cruelty wherewith she treated all who dared differ from her. He asked him how he could look unmoved on the way in which she had treated the nation from which he came, the sanguinary measures, which from time to time she carried out against them. "Can this be," he called out in bitterness of spirit, "can this be the religion of love she boasts it to be ?" He then spoke with enthusiasm and eloquence of the privileges of the Jewish nation and God's election of them. He spoke of their steadfastness and submission in suffering and persecutions which had now lasted for more than a thousand years ; of their faithfulness to Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whom they had served unflinchingly in spite of the most cruel persecutions, tortures and martyrdom they had to suffer from the Church of Rome. He spoke of their high moral disposition, their charity and compassion and their acts of benevolence to the poor ; their domestic virtues, the exemplary family life they led ; in short, of all those good qualities which could not be denied. His words had the desired effect. A revulsion of feeling took place in the spirit of Elchanan. Pope Victor was gained for Judaism, for his people, for his family.

He determined to give up his high position, to leave his office and his palace secretly and to spend

the rest of his life among his own people. It was arranged in what manner he "the observed of all observers," should effect his escape from the Vatican and from Rome ; and the plan was carried out soon after. Clad in the garb of a peasant, Pope Victor III. forsook the Vatican never to return, leaving his rival Clemens in possession of the chair of St. Peter.

CHAPTER XII.

THE POPE'S DISAPPEARANCE.

THE disappearance of Pope Victor III. created a great sensation at the time ; but the idea that a Pope could voluntarily leave his position, naturally entered no man's mind, and most people came to the conclusion that, in some way, he had been made away with by the partisans of the other Pope, Clemens III.

Very soon after there appeared at the house of Rabbi Simeon in Mainz a man poorly clad, and of rather emaciated appearance. No one knew who he was, nor whence he had come, not even the leading members of the Jewish community ; for the danger which might accrue, not only to the community of Mainz, but to the whole Jewry of Germany and other places in Europe if it became known that the former Pope was living among them as a renegade from his religion, was so great that the reconciled father and son dared not draw any one into the secret.

Only one person besides the Rabbi and his son knew of it, and this was a woman past her first youth, with traces of former beauty still visible in her features. She had lived in the congregation as a retired widow, and for her unostentatious piety and works of charity done in secret, was held in great esteem by all. Some little time after the arrival of the stranger she also became an in-

mate of the Rabbi's house, and was quietly married to his son, for she was none other than the maiden whom as Bishop of Mainz he had liberated from captivity.

Day and night Elchanan was now intent on the study of the law and rabbinic lore ; for he had much to learn to make up for lost time. Owing, however, to his extraordinary capacity he made such rapid progress in his studies that next to his father he became the most learned man in Mainz.

When Rabbi Simeon was, soon after, gathered to his fathers, "old and full of years" (days) the choice of the community for his successor fell on the stranger, but he, declaring himself unworthy of this office, peremptorily declined to accept it, but on being pressed, he promised to assist the successor of Rabbi Simeon with his advice.

In order to keep alive the memory of his son and his strange history for future generations, Rabbi Simeon, previous to his death, which happened a few days before the breaking out of the persecution against the Jews, consequent on the first Crusade, composed a Synagogue prayer, or poem, which he recommended for use in all Synagogues, and which was adopted in all Jewish communities in Germany and Poland. This poem, among the acrostics of the Rabbi's name, contains both the Hebrew and the Christian names of his son ; Elchanan and Adam in two consecutive lines ; and to this day they are to be found in the Machsor (Prayer for High Festivals) in the Prayer for the second day of the New Year (Rosh Hashana) ; as follows :—

אֵל חֲנָן נִחַלְתָּן בְּנוֹעַם לְהַשְׁפִּיר
יָדְעָם קָרוֹא קִרְבָּנוֹתָיו בְּמִסְפָּר.

CHAPTER XIII.

POPE VICTOR DIES A MARTYR FOR HIS OLD FAITH.

ELCHANAN, alas, was not long permitted to enjoy rest and quiet in his retirement. As he had once stood on the highest pinnacle of honour and authority, so it was reserved for him to drain the cup of humiliation to its very dregs. What his father had once predicted in a state of ecstasy was now to be fulfilled. When the call of Urban II. resounded through Europe exhorting all Christendom to fight the unbelievers and re-conquer the Holy Sepulchre, a kind of frenzy seized not only on Princes and Knights but also on simple citizens, labourers and peasants, and of all these classes numbers responded to the call; these were joined by many of the lowest rabble, whose sole object was to satisfy their love of plunder. But instead of going over the seas, thousands of miles away, and exposing themselves to danger, they, instigated by plotting priests and fanatical monks, fell on the unarmed Jewish people. In Mainz alone 1300 Jews are said to have been butchered in a short time.

The Jews, as was to be expected, did not respond to the Pope's call to fight the Mohammedans, and declared it wrong to attack people who had done them no harm, though they were unbelievers. Elchanan went even farther, exhorting all the Jewish communities in Germany to resist the Pope's call; to stand fast in their religious convictions and to take no part in the nefarious business, which, besides, threatened danger to all countries. Not only did he inveigh by word of mouth, and from the pulpit, against the Crusades, he wrote a pamphlet in Latin, in an able manner refuting the

specious reasons given by other writers in support of the movement, and showing them to be contrary to the true spirit of Christianity. He even went still farther; he addressed people in the open market place, fearlessly bearing witness against the popular delusion. Such presumption on the part of a Jew could not be tolerated. He was seized and thrown into prison, under the accusation of raising a sedition against the Pope and the Catholic religion.

Somewhat later it was asserted that he was an apostate Christian; an accusation which he did not contradict, and he was condemned to death at the stake. The sentence was soon carried out. As the flames rose and caught his garments, he intoned with a loud voice Hebrew thanksgiving songs; he then tore open his shirt, and, tradition says, showed to all around the red cross which had been tattooed on his breast when he mounted the papal chair. "See!" he cried with a last effort, "do you recognise in this sign the former head of your false religion, and of your Church deluged in blood? Behold! I prefer to suffer and die with God's people, those Jews whom you despise and persecute, than to be at the head of your lying religion! I choose rather to be the last among my own people than the first among you. I am a Jew, and as a Jew I die! 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD'!"

Thus died Elchanan (the son of Rabbi Simeon the Great), who occupied the papal chair as Pope Victor III., and who returned to the faith of his fathers in the year of grace 1096, or 4856 after the creation of the world according to Jewish computation.



